

About the Bible

2 Timothy 3 – 1 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. 6 For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, 7 always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. 9 But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men. 10 You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**

In many parts of China, Christians have risked imprisonment simply to own a Bible.

- In one gathering, when a shipment of Bibles finally arrived, believers didn't casually flip through them. Many hugged them. Some wept. Others kissed the cover because they had prayed for years just to have a copy of God's Word.
- One woman said she had shared a single Bible with several families, reading it only on the days it was her turn. Imagine treasuring the Scriptures so deeply that waiting a week to read them felt like waiting to breathe again.
- Meanwhile, many of us have multiple Bibles gathering dust on our shelves.

"The greatest tragedy in America isn't that we don't own Bibles—it's that we own them but many don't care to know what's in it"

Friends, the issue isn't whether you have a Bible. The question is whether the Bible has you.

- Is it shaping your mind? Is it correcting your heart?
- Is it directing your steps? Is it feeding your soul?
- Because this Book is not simply paper and ink. It is the very breath of Almighty God.
- And if God breathed it, we ought to believe it, obey it, cherish it, and build our lives upon it."

I love that with the bible you're not only secure historically, you're secure presently and prophetically you're secure futuristically.

- My hope today is that you would understand that the bible is not simply Christian or religious paraphernalia.
- It is breath of life to the one who breathes it in. It is true, it is filling – it is for EVERY season.

Allow me to begin by sharing with you what the bible is NOT:

- Not merely a self-help book. Not simply a collection of moral stories. Not just a life manual full of practical tips. Not a lucky charm or decorative family heirloom.

Hebrews 4:12 -- For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- This is why some of us maybe avoid opening the bible – because every time you read it you FEEL bad.
- This book of truth helps drive LIFE to dry bones. It's words are like a mirror against our faces. ;
- The author of Hebrews said it's SHARPER than any two-edged sword. NO matter how good or bad you think you are, it finds a way to pierce through anything to place in our hearts the true word of God.

Every Christian, MUST believe the truth of the word of God and be expositional in learning it.

- Not just piecing it apart to meet our individual needs but sticking to even the parts that offend our flesh.

- The bible doesn't care about how "good" we think we are... It's the same bible, in **Isaiah 64:6 that says -- 6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.**

I hope friends, that you're gauging today how important, NO, how IMPERATIVE it is for every believer to trust AND believe in the word of the living God. It is not about how good we think we are – the bible is a mirror – a 20x magnification mirror that causes us to see our spiritual blemishes. It's the REAL us who we see.

Let me give you some background to what Paul was teaching Timothy here:

- The beginning portion of chapter 3 is Paul informing Timothy about the character of the last days, and then instructed him how to respond.
- Action must be based on knowledge.
- **Warren Weirsbe says: "Too many Christians are like the pilot who informed his passengers, "We are lost, but we are making very good time."**
- Paul uses the phrase "last days" because in them God is completing His purposes for His people.
- It's clear in these first few verses of chapter 3 that the people are living crazy, ironically it sounds like much of what we see today.
- But what's interesting here is that these characteristics are not ones placed on "people" in general, but on those who appear to be spiritual or religious.
- It is more egregious to God, that these 18 or so characteristics are being displayed by people who proclaim His name.

It stands out to me that these characteristics can be cradled by this single posture of the heart of any person: **that they're "lovers of their own selves"**

- I am not saying you should hate yourself... but there is a grave danger when you love yourself above anything or anyone else especially God.

Verses 2 – 4 say: 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God

- There is God, there are people, and there are things. God is to be worshiped, people are to be loved, and things are to be used. But when we put ourselves at the center, everything gets out of order. We stop worshiping God, start loving things, and start using people.
- Though my sermon today is about the bible – I want to stress the context of **verses 16 and 17** about the "breathed out" scripture of God.
- In short, God has granted us His perfect and Holy Word to help GUIDE us in how to better walk as faithful believers
- So many people, even here today, are wanting to have God walk closely with us instead of us pursuing to walk closely with Him.
- We expect God to do the work to join us on OUR preferred path, and Bless IT instead of us doing the work to pursue being close to Him and getting to know Him better, through His word.
- We all need the Fullness of the word of God to rightly walk with Him – so we need to fully believe this...

FIRST, we believe that the bible has a Divine Source.

- Verse 16 says "All Scripture is breathed out by God." The Bible is not man's opinion about God but God's revelation of Himself.
- So because its source is divine, its authority is absolute.— It is insufficient for a believer to say they believe in God, but not in His word.
- Jesus affirmed the authority of Scripture when HE tells us in Matthew 5 that he has not come to abolish the law, He came to fulfill it.
- If the word wasn't important, then He would have just flipped it along with the tables in the temple.

Beginning in verse 10 – Paul commends and teaches Timothy on being a faithful student and disciple.

- A reminder to us that we can SAY whatever we want to say and we might be gifted to say it, but our testimony, our actions speak WAY louder.
- Timothy followed Paul, in a God honoring way, because Paul was living a God-honoring life.
- Paul was teaching Timothy that despite so many leaders and Christians displaying the characteristics early in this chapter—true believers should strive to follow the right spiritual leaders.
- Leaders who have good testimonies, who do Good, who teach a true and biblical doctrine, who practice what they preach, and who glorify God in all that they do.
- Again, I say to you that each of us MUST accept the authority and efficacy of the word of God; the bible.

We see Paul list 4 essential purposes of the word in our text:

1. **The purpose of Teaching** – It shows us what is true.
 - Paul teaches us that the scriptures are holy. Worthy to be believed and followed
 - The Word of God tells us what is true about God, about ourselves, about sin, and about salvation. In a world filled with competing voices, Scripture gives us a standard we can trust.
 - **The Word tells me what to believe.**
2. **The purpose of Reproof** – It exposes where we are wrong.
 - The Bible doesn't just encourage us; sometimes it confronts us. It reveals the attitudes, choices, and sins we would rather ignore. God's Word shines light into places we would prefer to keep in the dark.
 - **The Word tells me where I'm wrong.**
3. **The purpose of Correction** – It restores us to the right path.
 - God doesn't expose our wrong just to condemn us or to abuse or ridicule us --
 - He shows us what's wrong so He can show us how to make it right. The Word doesn't just say, *"You're going the wrong way."* It points us back toward the right way.
 - **The Word shows me how to get back on track.**
4. **The purpose of Training in righteousness** – It forms, in us, a Christlike character over time.
 - Following Jesus isn't a one-time decision; it's a lifelong process of becoming more like Christ.
 - Through Scripture, God trains our minds, shapes our character, disciplines our desires, and teaches us how to live faithfully.
 - **The Word teaches me how to live. It teaches me how to love for and LIKE Christ.**

If you long to hear the voice of God and have His Word near you, remember this:

- The Bible is not merely ink on paper.
- It is the living Word of God. It tells us the truth about God, ourselves, sin, salvation, and eternity.

And remember—even Jesus depended on the Word.

- When Satan tempted Him in the wilderness, Jesus didn't rely on Himself or His feelings. He responded by saying, "It is written."

If Jesus stood on the Word, how much more should we?

So when temptation comes, hold fast to the Word. When fear comes, hold fast to the Word. When life doesn't make sense, hold fast to the Word.

The bible isn't just information for your mind—it is life for your soul. Paul says in Philippians 2:16, "holding fast to the word of life."

This is the word of life. The written word about the living Word.